

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia

Report by – ALEXIS KENNY – 2007 Churchill Fellow

The Dame Roma Mitchell Fellowship to undertake advanced flute performance development and observation

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Signed: Alexis Kenny

Dated: 21/5/08

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Introduction

This report concerns research undertaken as part of the Dame Roma Mitchell Churchill Fellowship during the period from November 2007 until March 2008. A detailed description and discussion of the Programme activities is followed by concluding remarks and recommendations. Through my work I was able to develop and expand my repertoire, broaden my understanding of orchestral playing, and network with experts. A particular area of interest for me is mentoring. I hope to engage with young musicians regarding learning opportunities abroad and in Australia.

I wish to thank the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for their sponsorship of the Dame Roma Mitchell Churchill Fellowship, and for cultivating my passion for learning through their generous work. My experience was profoundly inspiring, and far exceeded my expectations. I would like to acknowledge the support of my family, Churchill Fellows Michele Juratowitch (2003 Counselling of Gifted Children and Parents) and Geoffrey Collins (1982 Flute Technique/Repertoire), Roger Benedict, my colleagues and friends both in Australia and overseas.

Executive Summary

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Project Description

To undertake advanced flute performance development and observation.

Highlights

- Lessons with Emily Beynon (Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra), Michael Hasel (Berlin Philharmonic), Jaime Martin (English National Opera and Chamber Orchestra of Europe), Michael Cox, Daniel Pailthorpe and Kathleen Stevenson (BBC Symphony Orchestra members)
- Playing for Sophie Cherrier (Paris Conservatoire and Ensemble Intercontemporain) and José-Daniel Castellon (Conservatoire de Lausanne)
- Observing the Flute Class of Felix Renggli ([Hochschule für Musik, Basel](#))
- Observing rehearsals of the Berlin Philharmonic, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Orchestre de Paris
- Meeting international soloist Sharon Bezaly after her performance with the Residentie Orchestra in The Hague

Concert Attendance:

- Berlin Philharmonic with Emmanuel Pahud (Principal Flute)
- Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra performance of Debussy's *La Mer* with Emily Beynon
- Chamber Orchestra of Europe at the Lucerne Easter Festival
- BBC Symphony performance of Debussy Programme with Michael Cox
- BBC Symphony performance of Dvorak, *Symphony No. 8* with Daniel Pailthorpe
- English National Opera performance of Britten's *Turn of the Screw* with Jaime Martin
- Orchestre de l'Opera National de Paris – Woodwind Chamber Music
- Prades aux Champs-Élysées, Festival Pablo Casals – Chamber Music

Conclusions

I was able to develop and expand my repertoire, broaden my understanding of orchestral playing, and network with esteemed industry professionals. I intend to disseminate the information regarding my Fellowship through community activities which focus on performance (through outreach programmes and regional touring), education (youth music tutoring/interaction with flute and teaching organisations/mentoring), and networking (promoting orchestral playing and connecting people).

Programme Summary/Itinerary

28th November – 10th December 2007; London, United Kingdom

Lisa Beznosiuk	Principal Flute, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment Professor, Royal College of Music
Michael Cox	Principal Flute, BBC Symphony Orchestra
Gareth Davies	Principal Flute, London Symphony Orchestra
Paul-Edmund Davies	Principal Flute, Philharmonia Orchestra
Jaime Martin	Principal Flute, English National Opera Principal Flute, Chamber Orchestra of Europe
Daniel Pailthorpe	Co-Principal Flute, BBC Symphony Orchestra
Kathleen Stevenson	Principal Piccolo, BBC Symphony Orchestra

10th – 17th December 2007/17th – 19th January and 23rd – 27th February 2008; Amsterdam and The Hague, The Netherlands

Emily Beynon	Principal Flute, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra
Sharon Bezaly	International Soloist
Benoit Fromanger	Professor of Flute, Royal Conservatoire, The Hague
Wolfgang Schulz	Principal, Vienna Philharmonic
Dieter Flury	Principal, Vienna Philharmonic

28th – 29th December 2007; Berlin, Germany

Prof. Michael Hasel	Flute, Berlin Philharmonic
Emmanuel Pahud	Principal Flute, Berlin Philharmonic

10th – 12th January and 5th – 9th March 2008; Basel/Geneva/Lausanne/Lucerne, Switzerland

José-Daniel Castellon	Professor of Flute, Conservatoire de Lausanne
Felix Renggli	Professor of Flute, Hochschule für Musik, Basel
Jacques Zoon	Professor of Flute, Conservatoire de Musique de Genève

12th – 17th January and 19th January – 5th February 2008; Paris, France

Philippe Bernold	Professor of Chamber Music, Conservatoire de Paris
Sophie Cherrier	Professor of Flute, Conservatoire de Paris Flute, Ensemble Intercontemporain
Gareth Davies	Principal Flute, London Symphony Orchestra
Jean Ferrandis	Professor of Flute, École Normale de Musique de Paris
Patrick Gallois	Professor of Flute, Conservatoire de Aulnay-sous-Bois Prades aux Champs-Élysées, Festival Pablo Casals
Claude Lefebvre	Professor of Flute, Conservatoire National de Région de Paris Orchestre de l'Opera National de Paris
Vincent Lucas	Principal Flute, Orchestre de Paris Professor of Flute, Conservatoire National de Région de Paris

Description of Programme

The activities undertaken are listed geographically and in sequence from interactive to self-directed observation; that is, private lessons through a range of learning opportunities to concert attendance. Class Presentations involved a lesson scenario, generally attended by other students for approximately thirty minutes duration.

United Kingdom

Lessons

Michael Cox, Jaime Martin, Daniel Pailthorpe, Kathleen Stevenson

Observation

Historical Performance Class of Lisa Beznosiuk
Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment rehearsals

Concert Attendance

BBC Symphony – Debussy Programme
BBC Symphony – Dvorak, *Symphony No. 8*
English National Opera – Britten, *Turn of the Screw*
Historical Performance Department Performance, Royal College of Music
London Symphony Orchestra – Britten, *Billy Bud*
Philharmonia Orchestra

The Netherlands

Lessons

Emily Beynon

Observation

Flute Class of Benoit Fromanger

Concert Attendance

Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra – Debussy, *La Mer*
Residentie Orchestra – Sharon Bezaly, Soloist
Vienna Philharmonic

Germany

Lessons

Prof. Michael Hasel

Observation

Berlin Philharmonic rehearsals

Concert Attendance

Berlin Philharmonic

Switzerland

Class Presentation

José-Daniel Castellon and Jacques Zoon

Observation

Flute Classes of José-Daniel Castellon, Felix Renggli and Jacques Zoon
Chamber Orchestra of Europe rehearsals

Concert Attendance

Chamber Orchestra of Europe – Beethoven, *Symphony No. 3*

France

Class Presentation

Sophie Cherrier and Jean Ferrandis

Observation

Flute Classes of Sophie Cherrier, Jean Ferrandis, Patrick Gallois, Claude Lefebvre and Vincent Lucas
Chamber Music Class of Philippe Bernold
Piccolo Masterclass given by Michael Hasel at the Conservatoire de Paris
Berlin Philharmonic rehearsals
London Symphony rehearsals
Orchestre de Paris rehearsals

Concert Attendance

Ensemble Intercontemporain
Orchestre de l'Opéra National de Paris – Woodwind Chamber Music
Orchestre de Paris – Brahms, *Symphony No. 4*
Prades aux Champs-Élysées, Festival Pablo Casals

Discussion of Programme

This discussion will address the activities described above. It is important to note that in almost all cases, concerts were attended and rehearsals observed in order to study particular flautists' skills in performance. It is crucial to engage with the music in context – out of the classroom and in the concert hall. Other factors that added to this experience were particular soloists and conductors, as well as the buildings. Consequently, links were fostered with European pedagogues, performers and students. Finally, the programme provided contact with Australian mentors, colleagues and friends in Europe which provided further depth to the investigation.

Europe provided the opportunity to experience a unique and inspirational learning environment in that it was the birthplace of classical music and the symphonic orchestra as we know it today, as well as the location for some of the world's best performances. I was exposed to myriad musical influences and a variety of know-how that is far broader than can be experienced within Australia.

Undertaking advanced flute tuition with internationally renowned pedagogues/performers developed my solo and orchestral repertoire, in particular audition excerpts. I learned numerous approaches to interpretation which was the primary subject of the lessons. Technique, embouchure and breathing were the other main areas of focus. As an extension to this intensive mode of learning, the Class Presentations allowed for interaction with students which expanded my understanding of European standards, opinions and style. As more students are electing to study outside their country of birth and with Professors who are less committed to national trends of the past, the classroom has become a cosmopolitan forum. Furthermore, I reconnected with students from my previous study trip in 2004 which was important for maintaining relationships. Observing the Flute Classes exposed me to new repertoire and ideas of interpretation.

During my time in Paris, I unexpectedly met with Associate Professor Elizabeth Koch OAM (1976 Flute Playing), Head of Woodwind at the Elder Conservatorium of Music in Adelaide. Fortuitously, we attended Professor Cherrier's Flute Class at the Paris Conservatoire on the same day. It was wonderful to play for Professor Cherrier and to discuss this with Liz who I first met in 2005 through her capacity as a tutor for the Australian Youth Orchestra. Consequently, I was introduced to Professor Ferrandis and was able to deconstruct my experiences to date, as well as my plans for the remainder of my Fellowship.

As a final comment on my pedagogical encounters, it was interesting to learn which instruments the professors and students played, and to compare experiences as some brands are not available in Australia.

Observing rehearsals and attending performances of leading orchestras and chamber ensembles, significantly expanded my understanding and appreciation of orchestral playing. These activities were thoroughly absorbing and inspirational. The Fellowship afforded me the chance to be on the other side of the podium, unhindered by schedules and with mental clarity that is often difficult to attain whilst working professionally in a full-time position.

The first rehearsals that I attended were of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. This experience exposed me to one of the world's leading early music ensembles, in particular the strong leadership of the Principal, Lisa Beznosiuk. Due to her initiative, Lisa arranged for me to observe the Berlin Philharmonic in rehearsal under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle. Fortunately, my unlimited Eurail pass enabled me to include this exciting detour in my Fellowship Programme. I was overwhelmed by the orchestra's skills and musical power, in particular the playing of Principal Flute, Emmanuel Pahud. At this time I had an outstanding lesson with Prof. Michael Hasel, also a member of the orchestra. Establishing this connection also resulted in my attendance at rehearsals in Paris.

Whilst in London I attended a performance of Britten's *Turn of the Screw* by the English National Opera. The musicality of Jaime Martin's flute playing was incredible. Additionally, it was an unexpected pleasure that Australia's Cheryl Barker was in one of the lead roles. Another highlight at this time was the BBC Symphony's performance of an all Debussy Programme. Michael Cox's control was phenomenal and it was particularly interesting to observe the interaction between the flautist and

conductor, David Robertson, throughout the solo sections. A similar communication was evident between Emily Beynon and Mariss Jansons in his direction of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

It was fascinating to attend performances in the Concertgebouw – one of the world's greatest concert halls. I heard such wonderful soloists as Gidon Kremer, the likes of who do not often perform in Australia. Likewise, the Vienna Philharmonic's performance under Valery Gergiev was interesting. Essentially, the Concertgebouw is an historic venue with an exceptional array of artists performing throughout the season. The final concert of greatest interest that I attended featured international soloist Sharon Bezaly with the Residentie Orchestra. It was lovely to meet such a distinguished musician and one who has championed contemporary music by such composer's as the Australian, Brett Dean, through her recording projects.

One of the greatest highlights of my Fellowship occurred in Switzerland when I attended the Chamber Orchestra of Europe performing Beethoven's *Symphony No. 3* at the Lucerne Easter Festival. It was sensational to hear this ensemble perform live and conducted by none other than Bernard Haitink. This orchestra's recordings of Beethoven's symphonies have provided the stylistic model for what I aspire to in my own playing. Furthermore, it was a pleasure to hear one of my former tutors, Matthew Wilkie, in his role of Principal Bassoon with the orchestra.

The Salle Pleyel hosted an abundance of fantastic concerts during my stay. On account of my previous connections I was privileged to observe several dress rehearsals. These included the Berlin Philharmonic featuring Anne-Sophie Mutter, conducted by Seiji Ozawa, the London Symphony orchestra with Gareth Davies in the Principal Flute chair, conducted by Sir John Eliot Gardiner and the Orchestre de Paris with Daniel Barenboim at the piano, conducted by Christoph Eschenbach, with whom I will have the experience of working under at the Schleswig Holstein Music Festival later this year. It was wonderful to hear Vincent Lucas perform with the Orchestre de Paris, particularly as I undertook a masterclass course with him in 2004 during which he did not perform. It was especially significant for me to attend performances at venues of historical import. The concert of woodwind chamber music given by members of the Orchestre de l'Opéra National de Paris, including Claude Lefebvre, was memorable on account of the venue, the Palais Garnier. Not only is this theatre of great historical and artistic value but it is also home to the Ballet de l'Opéra which toured Australia last year and for which I was an orchestra member. Finally, the Théâtre de Champs-Élysées which hosted Patrick Gallois's performance for the Prades aux Champs-Élysées, Festival Pablo Casals was the venue for the premiere of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps* in 1913.

It is difficult to quantify my learning outcomes through rehearsal observation and concert attendance. However, what I experienced has no doubt enriched my love of orchestral music, my appreciation of historical context, my passion for ensemble playing and most importantly my critical listening ability. I believe that my understanding of the immense impact of these events will be realised many fold, and for years to come.

Conclusions

Through lessons with internationally renowned pedagogues/performers I was able to develop my solo and chamber music repertoire, particularly audition excerpts, and to broaden my understanding of orchestral playing by observing rehearsals and attending performances of leading orchestras and chamber ensembles. My musical abilities were developed in such a way that will impact enormously on my performance skills, hopefully leading to audition success. Also, my repertoire knowledge and communication skills were expanded. The contacts and networks that I explored will directly benefit my teaching and other flautists.

I intend to disseminate the information regarding my Fellowship through community activities which I am now in a position to extend to a higher level. Such work will include performing through the outreach programs of organisations with which I am involved, at this time, The Queensland Orchestra and the Southern Cross Soloists in particular, as well as devising new education and concert ventures. Ongoing youth music tutoring, regional touring and interaction with flute/teaching organisations will also provide excellent forums for sharing my knowledge, and the experience of live music performance.

Recommendations

In terms of my role in bringing about improvements in Australia, I believe that the most effective means of promoting repertoire and developing understanding of orchestral playing is to talk about the issues involved, whether in or out of the teaching studio. It is my intention to network and connect people, especially the next generation of orchestral musicians by communicating. It is imperative to initiate conversation and provoke thought on these matters and to provide advice and mentorship, particularly during the transition from student to professional. In this way I can liaise with students and support the people behind orchestral education programmes and eventually develop formal training opportunities. To this end I have already engaged in discussion with many tertiary students, and have supported The Queensland Orchestra's Traineeship programme as an audition panel member. My next commitment is a series of interviews for the Queensland Flute Guild newsletter. Finally, I will promote orchestral playing by communicating my enthusiasm for this art form in seeking to raise its profile. For some interesting comments regarding Australian musicians' self-perception and the need to retain talent, please refer to the recommendations made by Bryony MacGillivray (2005 Advanced Flute Tuition).

There are numerous areas for improvement in Australia. Increased funding for the arts is of primary importance; after all, culture drives the economy through identity. The most significant aspect requiring attention is arts awareness; raising the profile of arts organisations is crucial so that we can be proud of the amazing work that Australian artists are producing. Wonderful things are already happening, although the community would benefit from increased:

- Touring of overseas and Australian artists
- Access to open rehearsals
- Student rush and under 30 ticket schemes
- Opportunity for exchanges during tertiary study

Admission to Performance streams of tertiary courses should be limited, in order to reflect the availability of long-term or secure employment. This process should not be quota based, allowing for a deficit or surplus of suitable candidates. Furthermore, the outstanding training prospects provided by such organisations as the Australian Youth Orchestra, the state youth orchestras, and programmes of the professional orchestras should be assimilated into tertiary courses and therefore eligible for HECS-HELP funding. Lastly, students should insist on appropriate resources and facilities.